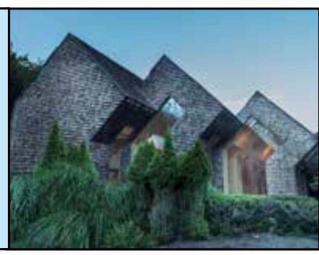




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An Arts Center for Greenport

Prominent resident heads drive to convert town theater

By JERRY CIMISI
It's being said that the Village of Greenport has become the Sag Harbor of Long Island's North Fork. Even in midwinter its streets are crowded with locals and weekenders..



Tony Spiridakis, Greenport resident, major film and theater artist, and enthusiastic, hands-on champion of the North Fork Arts Center.



Postcard of Greenport Theater, 1938.

COVER STORY

Now the Greenport Theater, with a history dating back to the early 20th century, is primed to become the North Fork Arts Center.

For years the theater has been open only in the summer months. Following the summer of 2022, a genuine theatrical angel, American film director, writer, actor, producer and playwright Tony Spiridakis – best known for such movies as “Queens Logic” and “Tinseltown” – stepped in. He made a deal with owner Josh Sapan to open the theater for winter weekends, with the filmmaker covering the cost to do so. It shattered the image of not much going on in Greenport during the winter. Said Spiridakis, “All of a sudden there were 300 people here at night. They were craving it. They were starved for it.”

Earlier this year, when Sapan put the theater on the market, he was

one of Spiridakis’s biggest supporters when the latter began a drive to gather \$1 million to create a nonprofit that would take over the theater and use it as a base for the North Fork Arts Center. By the beginning of spring, \$860,000 had been raised. By June \$1,160,000 in pledges had been made, with \$600,000 converted into donations to date.

Spiridakis envisions the North Fork Arts Center as a nurturing hub

for both cinema and live performances. He sees the project as community

Filmmaker Tony Spiridakis and Greenport Theater owner Josh Sapan led the effort to transform the venue into the North Fork Arts Center.

and educational enrichment for the North Fork, as well as the preservation of a historic building.

Spiridakis wrote the screenplay for the soon-to-be released film,

“Ezra.” Directed by Tony Goldwyn, it stars Bobby Cannavale, Robert De Niro, Rose Byrne, Vera

Farmiga, Rainn Wilson, Whoopi Goldberg, and newcomer William Fitzgerald. The film highlights the struggles of a family raising an autistic child. Cannavale plays Max Bernal, De Niro plays Max’s father, and William Fitzgerald plays Ezra Bernal, Max’s autistic son. The film will premiere at the Toronto International Film festival in September.

The Greenport Theater was built

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Greenport

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Alpina; Crabby Jerry’s; Claudio’s; Lucharito’s; North Fork Table & Inn.

Art Galleries: Cindy Pease Roe Studio & Gallery; Nova Constellation Gallery; The South Street Gallery; Fiedler Gallery; J. Garretson Fine Art Photography.

Accommodations: Greenport abounds in small but highly appealing hotels: The Harborfront Inn; Sound View; American Beech Hotel; The Gallery Hotel; the Line Beach House; and The Menhaden (located right next to the North Fork Arts Center, set to open late this year).

Then there is the Greenport Harbor Brewing Company and, just outside the village, the Horton Point Lighthouse.

A 10-minute ferry ride on the North Ferry will take you to Shelter Island. And if you want to go to Sag Harbor and the Hamptons, you can take the South Ferry at the other end of Shelter Island.

A little further east from Greenport, at Orient Point, you can catch the ferry to New London, on the Cross Sound Ferry. And just be-

cherry trees that provide a beautiful accent to the village.

At the end of the summer is the Annual Maritime Festival; this



For the kids: antique carousel at Mitchell Park. There's something for everyone in a truly charming place to live.

fore you come to the ferry there is Orient Beach State Park.

Here is something to put on your calendar for next spring: the Greenport Cherry Tree Festival, which runs from late April to the end of May. Greenport has an extraordinary number of magnificent

year it’s September 24-25.

For more information on what is available in Greenport, as well as the North Fork, visit www.greenportvillage.com and the www.northforkchamber.org.

–Jerry Cimisi